

# Maryland-National Park And Planning Commission

## AGENCY DESCRIPTION

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) is a bi-county agency established by the State in 1927 to prepare comprehensive land use and transportation plans as well as to acquire, develop, maintain, and operate a park system for Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

The agency is guided by a ten-member commission, five of whom represent Montgomery County and constitute the membership of the Montgomery County Planning Board. In its role as the Park Commission, the Planning Board makes policy decisions on park activities in Montgomery County.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The mission of the M-NCPPC is to provide for the acquisition, conservation, development, maintenance, and management of a park system which, in harmony with the environment and in partnership with the community and other public agencies: protects, conserves, enhances, and interprets the County's natural and cultural resources; identifies and offers a variety of leisure opportunities; and is safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all. It is the Department's commitment to be receptive, progressive, equitable, and adaptive in observing and fulfilling this mission for current and future generations.

Montgomery County currently has over 32,600 acres of parkland and 379 different park and open space areas maintained by the M-NCPPC. Most of the park acreage is found in large Countywide parks that serve all County residents and form the framework of the park system. These include Regional, Recreational, Stream Valley, Conservation, and Special Parks. Montgomery County residents also enjoy the benefit of many Community Use Parks that are closer to home and can be used on a daily basis. These include Urban, Neighborhood, and Local Parks, and Neighborhood Conservation Areas. The CIP contains acquisition and development proposals for both Countywide and Community Use Parks.

For information purposes, an outline of the Park Classification System contained in the Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) for Montgomery County is provided at the end of this chapter.

## PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Mary Ellen Venzke of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission at 301-495-2477 or Sara Burch

of the Office of Management and Budget at 240-777-2778 for more information regarding this department's capital budget.

## CAPITAL PROGRAM REVIEW

### M-NCPPC Request

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's FY07-12 capital program request totals \$179.5 million, or an 82 percent increase from the amended FY05-10 capital program of \$147.3 million. M-NCPPC's plan includes constructing new parks, renovating existing parks, and maintaining and improving physical infrastructure.

### Executive Recommendations

The Executive recommends a total six-year CIP of \$169.1 million, which represents an increase of \$21.761 million or nearly 14.8 percent compared to the amended FY05-10 capital program. The Executive recommends \$80.0 million, or 47.3 percent of M-NCPPC's request for Acquisition and \$89.1 or 52.7 percent of M-NCPPC's request for Development.

As noted in the Executive Recommendation pages following the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission PDFs at the end of this chapter, the Executive proposes that some projects be funded with funding sources that are different from M-NCPPC's request. The County Executive also advises that other projects be deferred for fiscal reasons or considered in the context of the Operating Budget.

### Highlights

- Support increases to infrastructure maintenance projects addressing ballfields, roof replacement, and minor renovations.
- Add three new local parks, Elmhirst Parkway, Greenbriar, and North Four Corners, and renovate one existing local park, Takoma-Piney Branch.
- Renovate the King Dairy Barn at the South Germantown Recreational Park to create a "Mooseum" to educate the public about dairy farming in Montgomery County.
- Address State environmental mandates by creating a new project, Pollution Prevention and Repairs to Ponds and Lakes.

## PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

The County Executive generally supports the program proposed by M-NCPPC, within the constraints of fund availability. The Executive is pleased to support the following new parks and park expansion requests which will provide additional and improved facilities, and also address the continuing and growing need for ballfields in the County:

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Elmhirst Parkway Local Park, Greenbriar Local Park, North Four Corners Local Park, and Takoma-Piney Branch Local Park.

The Executive recommends funding increases to infrastructure projects, including Ballfield Initiatives, Roof Replacement: Local and Non-Local Parks, Planned Lifecycle Asset Replacement: Non-Local Parks, Trails: Hard Surface Design and Construction. In the case of Roof Replacement: Non-Local Parks and PLAR: Non-Local Minor Renovations, the Executive proposes that the first year of the increase be funded by an FY06 supplemental appropriation using surplus funds. Also, the Executive recommends the new project, Pollution Prevention and Repairs to Ponds and Lakes. The first year of funding for this project will also be funded with an FY06 supplemental appropriation.

The Executive does not recommend funding Germantown Town Center Urban Park until further coordination has taken place. He also does not recommend funding Needwood Golf Course Improvements for fiscal policy reasons. The Executive proposes deferring consideration of Brookside Gardens Master Plan Implementation until the March 15<sup>th</sup> Operating Budget.

## **PROGRAM FUNDING**

M-NCPPC finances its six-year CIP using resources from five primary funding sources. They are General Obligation (G.O.) and Park and Planning bonds, Current Revenues, State Funds, and Other Funds.

### **G. O. Bonds and Park and Planning Bonds**

Primary local funding for park acquisition and development comes from two sources: Park and Planning bonds and County general obligation (G.O.) bonds. Park and Planning bonds fund local parks, while County G.O. bonds fund larger, regional parks, more likely to serve residents from all over the County. (See *Parks Classification System*, below.) Additional funding is received from State Program Open Space (POS) funds for park acquisition and development.

The Executive recommends \$80.7 million in general obligation bond-funded expenditures, an increase of \$3.5 million from the FY05-10 Amended CIP.

The Executive supports a total of \$20.9 million in Park and Planning bonds, \$3.7 million more than the \$17.2 million in the FY05-10 Amended CIP.

### **Current Revenues**

Park and Planning current revenues support local parkland and facility improvements which are not eligible for debt financing, for example, for planning or when the useful life of equipment does not equal or exceed the term of the bonds.

Non-local parkland and facilities are financed with County current revenues which are applied for project planning or to selected improvements of short useful life, while long-term

improvements, including land acquisition, are funded with County general obligation bonds. This relationship between the County and the M-NCPPC concerning the funding, acquisition, and development responsibilities for non-local parks is defined in a 1972 agreement between the two agencies. Under this agreement, non-local parks responsibilities include the acquisition and development of regional, special, and stream valley parks.

The Executive recommends a total of \$13.5 million in combined County current revenues and Park and Planning current revenues, an increase of \$8.4 million from the FY05-10 Amended CIP.

### **Enterprise Funds**

Revenue to fund the Parks CIP also comes from the operations of M-NCPPC's self-supporting Enterprise Fund facilities. Enterprise Funds support golf courses, tennis courts, skating rinks and other facilities that generate revenue, such as train rides and carousels. The request for FY07-12 Enterprise Funding is \$0.6 million which is equal to the current approved level. The Executive recommends Enterprise Funding at \$0.6 million.

As golf courses are enterprise fund activities, Needwood Golf Course Improvements as proposed by M-NCPPC should be funded with Enterprise funds and not tax-supported current revenue.

### **State Funds**

State funds include State Program Open Space (POS) funds and other State aid. POS funds are for acquisition of parkland and development of new parks. POS funds can be used to cover 100 percent of acquisition costs, up to an amount set by the State. Further, a 75 percent State and 25 percent County match provides for the development of new parks or additional acquisition. This allows the County to leverage local funds.

The County Executive is recommending POS funding at the level of \$31.2 million. This level of funding is less than M-NCPPC estimate of POS funds that will be available for programming.

### **Other Funds**

The Executive is recommending \$20.2 million of expenditures with funding from eight other sources: contributions, Certificates of Participation, Revolving (P&P only), Development District Funds, rental income from telecommunications leases, Federal TEA-21 funds, Land Sale (P&P only) and the Water Quality Protection Charge.

## **PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM**

**Countywide Parks** serve all residents of Montgomery County and include:

Regional Parks: Parks of 200+ acres that generally contain a stream valley, picnic/playground areas, and interpretive or

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other natural areas, but which also provide a wide range of recreational opportunities such as: trails, tennis courts, athletic fields, golf courses, and campgrounds.

Recreational Parks: Parks larger than 50 acres in size which are more intensively developed than Regional Parks and may contain athletic fields, tennis and multi-use courts, picnic/playground areas, a golf course, water-oriented recreation areas, trails, and natural areas.

Special Parks: Parks which include areas with unique features of historic and cultural significance. Varying in type, they may include agricultural centers, gardens, small conference centers, or historic sites.

Stream Valley Parks: Interconnected parks along major stream valleys providing picnic and playground areas, hiker-biker and bridle trails, athletic fields, and conservation and recreation areas.

Conservation Parks: Large parks that place primary emphasis on preservation of areas of significant natural value and provide opportunities for compatible passive recreation activities.

**Community-Use Parks** serve residents of surrounding communities and include:

Urban Parks: Very small parks, serving highly urban areas with landscaping, sitting/picnic areas, play equipment, tennis courts, and shelters.

Neighborhood Parks: Small parks, providing informal recreation in residential areas with play equipment, play fields, sitting areas, shelters, and tennis courts.

Local Parks: Parks that provide athletic fields and programmed and general recreation facilities such as play equipment, tennis and multi-use courts, sitting/picnic areas, shelters, and other recreational facilities.

Neighborhood Conservation Areas: Small parcels of conservation-oriented parkland in residential areas, generally dedicated at the time of subdivision.

In addition to the parks operated by the M-NCPPC, there are more than 15,000 acres of Federal and State parkland and some local parks maintained by municipalities in Montgomery County.

## **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP), operating budget, and capital budget for the M-NCPPC are coordinated with the fiscal and capital program requirements of the Montgomery County Charter. The M-NCPPC is required to submit a CIP program to the County Executive and County Council by November 1 of each odd-numbered year. This CIP is reviewed

by the County Executive and is included, with the Executive's recommendations, in the recommended CIP that is submitted to the County Council by January 15. After public hearings, the Council reviews and approves the proposed capital program with such modifications as it deems appropriate. The approved program becomes final upon 30 days written notice to the Commission.

In connection with the approval of the M-NCPPC operating budget, the County Council also approves a capital budget which reflects approved expenditures for the first year of the approved CIP. The M-NCPPC may not undertake any project which is not contained in the first year of the approved CIP. The M-NCPPC's capital budget and CIP are conceptually distinct. The six-year CIP contains the proposed construction and funding schedules for previously approved and newly proposed projects and is subject to County Council modifications. The capital budget provides the appropriations necessary to implement the construction schedule.